

Tawau to have Covid-19 test lab in two weeks

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TAWAU: Tawau will have a laboratory to process Covid-19 samples to obtain the results, when it is ready in two weeks.

Health officer of the Tawau District Health Office, Dr G. Navindran said the laboratory was being set up at the Tawau Health Clinic at Kubota.

“When this lab is ready, the Covid-19 test results will be known faster,” he said when met by reporters after witnessing the opening of the Malaysian Armed Forces (ATM) Field Hospital, here, yesterday.

Currently, the swab test samples are being sent to the DGi Laboratory in Kota Kinabalu which can process 1,000 samples daily, apart from the public health lab at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Universiti Malaysia Sabah lab.

Meanwhile, Dr Navindran said it was estimated that 8,000 screening tests had been conducted in Tawau but 3,000 to 4,000 samples had not been processed.

“This is laboratory overload as all districts are conducting screening and sending the samples to the same lab (in Kota Kinabalu),” he added.

Meanwhile, the residents here welcome the targeted screening carried out by the Ministry of Health.

“The village heads assist in ensuring that the residents go for screening but there are places, especially the coastal areas where many foreign migrants live with the response being poor,” said Dr Navindran.

Meanwhile, Tawau Hospital director, Dr Norlimah Arsat said non-Covid-19 patients treated at the Field Hospital and in stable condition were not allowed to receive visitors so as to curb the viral infection.

She said the establishment of the Field Hospital enabled Tawau Hospital to focus on treating critical Covid-19 patients, while Tawau Hospital could also have more beds to treat level 3 to level 5 Covid-19 patients.

Field Hospital commander, Colonel Dr Shamsul Bahary Muhamad said 141 health personnel including 10 ATM officers and 61 of other ranks were stationed at the hospital.

“Hopefully, this field hospital can reduce the burden of Tawau Hospital in treating the number of Covid-19 patients which is expected to increase,” he added. – Bernama